

# **BUDGET / FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

## **MINUTES**

**Monday, May 16, 2011**

**Oliver Administration Building**

### **Present**

**Subcommittee: William O'Dell (Chair), John Bento and Diana Campbell (6:35)**

**School Committee, Administration and Staff: John Saviano, Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade, Pauline Silva and George Simmons**

**Guests: Kristen Quinn, Linda Rimoshytus and Laurel Thayer (7:00)**

**Bill O'Dell called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION: John Bento motioned to approve the minutes to the March 21, April 25 and May 9, 2011 meetings; Bill O'Dell seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 2 to 0.**

### **Solar Panels Grant Opportunity**

**Pauline Silva confirmed our liability insurance would cover damage to**

the panels and would cost the district an additional \$150 per year if we estimate the value of the panels at approximately \$250,000.

George met with Diane Williamson and Matt Calderiso, Director of the Sewer Department. Surprisingly there are not many areas on the high school roof that do not exceed the 5 degree slope and are large enough (18 sf) to accommodate the panels with the exception of an area of rooms E101 and 102; they did not have access to the auditorium roof which could be a possibility. We have three meters and qualify for three sets of panels; they could be placed on the ground but would be susceptible to vandalism. Diana said Diane Williamson had informed her the engineers felt the roofs look great. Bill felt the engineers' opinion was the one to go with. Diana also reported on the questions left from the last meeting—the Town enters into the lease, and just as in a renting situation, the school would own the panels. Regarding maintenance, there is very, very little; the panels are built to last 10 years and it is hoped we would keep them for at least 10 years; damage would be covered by the Trust. Melinda reminded everyone we would want Attorney Henneous to review the lease.

In response to questions from John Bento, George explained that since the panels need to be exposed to the sunlight and could not be protected in any way, kids throwing stones could do damage; the only metal they contain is aluminum and would be of not much value.

**Before going much further, the district must agree to pursue this, then determine how many panels we could install.**

**MOTION: Diana Campbell motioned to recommend to the full Committee to move forward with the solar panel opportunity pending review of the lease by our attorney. John Bento seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.**

**George Simmons left the meeting at 6:49 PM.**

### **FY 11 Budget Update**

**Pauline reviewed the details of her projected budget balance for FY 11 of \$419,413. Savings in water and electric are due to the installation of lighting and heat controls; telephone savings is from a newly negotiated contract; transportation was negotiated at a lower rate than was budgeted; and out-of-district tuitions are lower because the Director of PPS is committed to bringing SPED students back by strengthening our in house programs to provide a better or equally good program and possibly receive paying students from other districts. Melinda commended Colt Andrews Principal Tracey McGee who hosts a special program for troubled students from all over the district. Diana suggested contacting Representative Morrison, who has a special needs child and might be a source of information on grants and resources. Denise Arsenault commented on the amazing**

services we provide in this program and in the pre-school program for students with profound needs.

### **FY 12 Budget Development**

The \$400,000 in savings from FY 11 reduced the projected shortfall to \$850,000. Bill mentioned that in the past, this money would have been transferred to capital projects.

Administration proposed reductions to meet the budget, including elimination of 6 certified positions, 2 non-certified positions, and reductions in SPED out of district placements, utilities, unemployment reimbursement to the state, and other various efficiencies (may take a bus off the road and running buses to capacity).

Laurel Thayer, FACS teacher at Mt. Hope, spoke on behalf of the department and at the recommendation of Mr. Rebello, saying they offered 12 classes this year, and 12 years ago our program was the best in the State; half of the FACS program was cut in the program of studies and the teachers were not consulted on which classes should be cut. Melinda suggested Laurel meet with her and Don Rebello; Bill O'Dell informed Laurel that she will also have an opportunity to speak at the school committee meeting on Monday. Diana would like assurance we are treating all teachers and programs equally.

**Linda Rimoshytus commented on the proposed elimination of the ISS teacher at Mt. Hope saying this is a good move because students see ISS as “a joke” and perhaps the threat of having to stay after school will be a deterrent.**

**Marj McBride took issue with the Coordinator of Information Systems being a teacher with a teacher’s pay and benefits and asked where in the system does this position fit and to whom does it report. Pauline said in UCOA it comes under student assessment. Melinda said it is a hybrid position that requires an educational background and as the state moves forward with the increased use of student achievement data, this position created over 10 years ago will grow. Marj feels this position should not be in the teacher category, but in the “other” category like Paul Morris and George Simmons. Diana said she was employed as one of these people and she reported to her Assistant Superintendent; it is a big job and requires understanding of educational concepts; moving this position to another category may not provide a savings because you still have to pay for that level of education and background. Marj reiterated this position should not be a teacher. Denise agreed that if the person holding this position may retire in the near future, this may be a good time to review the position. Marj does not want this issue to die. Melinda and Mario will meet to address this.**

**Susan Rancourt asked the protocol for setting up the program of studies and the elimination of classes and if teachers have an**

opportunity to advocate for themselves. Melinda explained that staffing is an administrative decision; the process begins in the fall with discussions with school-based administrators; teacher input would occur with the school-based administrator. Bill would encourage the School Committee Chair to refer this back to the Superintendent for discussion and remove it from the Budget Subcommittee. Linda Rimoshytus asked what would be the proper time for the public to ask about the cuts. Melinda and Bill said many open discussions have been had to get to this point and discussion is not closed until the final vote of the Committee in June. Mario suggested that Linda become involved in the SIT process. Now knowing what the proposed cuts are, Linda is concerned and will speak at the next Committee meeting; many parents cannot be involved in SIT so she would like to find out how the process is handled. Bill further explained that the budget process is incredibly complex.

Regarding reductions, Marj asked if we are cutting supplies too much; Melinda will speak with the administrators about this. In response to John Saviano, Melinda reported 10 retirements received to date, with 17 expected.

The addition of 5 ½ certified staff members will be necessary due to increased enrollments, elimination of an administrative position, and to help pre-K students transition.

**There is a budget meeting on June 20 and the full Committee will vote on the budget on June 27. Use of the portable classroom is being proposed at Guiteras, which is in the historic district.**

**Marj has concerns that we have fixed costs and rely on reductions to keep us afloat. Bill has a high level of comfort in that we are conservative.**

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION: At 7:56 PM Diana Campbell motioned to adjourn. John Bento seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**/ca**